

The French King's DECLARATION,

That the CHILDREN of those of the *Pretended Reformed Religion* may change their Religion at the age of Seven years: with a Prohibition that those of the said Religion may not send their CHILDREN to be bred in Forreign Countries.

Registred in Parliament the 8th of July New Stile, 1681. and Printed at Paris.



Lewis by the grace of God King of *France* and of *Navarre*: To all those that shall see these present Letters, greeting. The great successes which it hath pleased God to give to the spiritual excitations, and the other reasonable means which We have hitherto used for the Conversion of Our Subjects of the pretended Reformed Religion, do oblige Us to second the motions which God has given to many of Our said Subjects to acknowledge the error wherein they were born; We therefore have resolved to Repeal some things in Our Declaration of the first of *February*, 1669. by which the Children of that Religion were in some sort hindered to convert themselves to the Catholick Apostolick and *Roman* Religion after the age of Seven years (in which they are capable of reason and choice, in a matter so important to them as is that of their Salvation) till the Males were of the age of Fourteen years, and Females of the age of Twelve; though in the Edict of *Nantes*, and in the other Edicts made in favour of the pretended Reformed Religion, there is no such provision made. And this being a thing of which it is necessary for Us to take care, *For these Reasons*, and for other Considerations moving Us thereunto, We have said and declared, and do say and declare by these Presents signed with Our Hand, And it is Our Will and Pleasure, that Our said Subjects of the pretended Reformed Religion, both Males and Females, having attained to the age of Seven years, may lawfully embrace the Catholick Apostolick and *Roman* Religion. And to that effect they shall be admitted to make abjuration of the pretended Reformed Religion, so as that their Fathers or Mothers may not give any hindrance to it upon any pretence whatsoever. And to that effect, We repeal so much as concerns this point in Our said Declaration of the first of *February*, 1669. Besides, We Will that the said Children that shall be converted after the age of Seven years compleat, shall enjoy the effect of Our Declaration of the Fourteenth of *October*, 1665. And that according to it, it shall be left to their choice, after their Conversion, either to return to live and be bred up in the same house with their Fathers and Mothers, or to go elsewhere; and to demand of them a Pension for their Subsistence proportionably to their condition and abilities; which Pension their said Fathers and Mothers shall be bound to pay to their Children quarterly: And in case they shall refuse to do it, Our Will is, that they shall be compelled to it by all due and reasonable ways. And We being informed that many of Our Subjects of the said pretended Reformed Religion, have sent their Children to be bred in Forreign Countries, by which they may receive *Maximes* contrary to the State, and the Fidelity which they owe Us by their birth, We do require them most expressly to recal them without delay under the following pains, that those who have Estates in Lands shall forfeit their whole Revenue during the first year, and a moiety of their said Revenue during all that time that they shall keep their Children in forreign Countries. And for those who have no Estates in Lands, they shall be obliged to recal their said Children under the pain of a Fine, which shall be determined proportionably to their Goods and Abilities. And they shall be obliged to make payments of their said Revenues and Fines every year, till they have recalled their Children. We prohibit Our Subjects of the said pretended Reformed Religion to send for the future their Children into forreign Countries, to be educated in them, before they are Sixteen years old, without Our express leave, under the pains above-mentioned. We do also Give in Charge to our beloved and faithful Counsellors that constitute Our Court of Parliament of *Paris*, that they make these Presents to be read, published, registred, and executed according to their Form and Tenour, without suffering them to be contravened in any sort or manner whatsoever: for such is Our pleasure. In witness whereof, We have put Our Seal to these Presents. Given at *Versailles* the 17th of *June*, in the year of Lord 1681. and the 39th year of Our Reign.

Signed LEWIS. In the Counterpart, by the King Colbert. And sealed with the Great Seal in yellow Wax.

Read, Published, and Registred at the instance of the King's Attorney-General, that they might be executed according to their Form and Tenour, according to the Judgement made the said day at *Paris* in the Parliament the 8th of *July* 1681. Signed James.

An Order of the Council of State.

THe King being informed in Council of the progress made in the Catholick Religion in many places of the *Lower Poitou*, and that several of the Inhabitants that were seduced by error do reunite themselves to the Church. And His Majesty likewise considering that the chief motive of the Edict of Grace, granted by the late King of glorious Memory, in the year 1629. to his Subjects of the pretended Reformed Religion, was to deface the memory of what was past, in hopes that his said Subjects, divesting themselves of all passions, might be more capable to receive the light of the Gospel, and to re-enter into the true Faith in which this Kingdom had continued above 1200. years. And whereas the Ministers of the pretended Reformed Religion, do endeavour by all sorts of Artifices to obstruct so good a work, which is contrary to his Majesties intentions; He having thereupon considered the Edict of 1629. together with the whole affair, His Majesty in Council does most expressly forbid all Ministers, Elders, or others of his Subjects, professing the said pretended Reformed Religion, to use any Menaces, Intimidations, Artifices, or any fact whatsoever to hinder the Conversion of those of the pretended Reformed Religion. And forbids all Ministers and Elders to enter their houses either by day or by night, except it be to visit the Sick, and do other functions of their Ministry, under the pain of Corporal punishment. And His Majesty ordains that he be informed of the violations of the said Edicts, and of this present Order, by the diligent care of his Attorneys; and that process be made against the guilty who shall violate the same, by the Judges to whom the Cognizance of it ought to belong. Given at *St. Cloud* the 19th of *April*, 1681. Signed le Tellier.

Some Particulars extracted out of a Letter of the 29th of June.

WHile our Enemies are every where pulling down our Churches, they procure an Edict, that our Ministers may not visit us in our houses; and so they intend to take from us the exercise of our Religion both in private and publick. I need not acquaint you with the slight pretences that serve to procure a condemnation of our Churches; how weak soever it is in Law, and how weakly soever it is proved, yet every thing alledged against us is sufficient. Every complaint made of our Ministers is believed. We have no more any humane confidence to depend upon: We are imprisoned, and kept there without any thing objected to us. Our Enemies will not be so kind as to make us feel all their rage at once, and make us die a single death, but intend to famish us, and make us die of hunger; and that not onely of the Word of the Lord, by depriving us of our Churches and Pastors, but even of our daily bread. In all these our sufferings, we cannot be accused of one act of rage against our Enemies, or of disloyalty to our King. And now our miseries encrease upon us, for an Edict is coming out, that our Children at Seven years old may change their Religion. We know what will follow upon us; and that our busie Enemies will be every where tempting our little ones; so that we dare no more reprove or chastize them for their faults, lest we thereby drive them to renounce our holy Faith at an age in which they cannot distinguish truth from falsehood, nor good from evil. We have nothing left us but to fly to God by Fasting, Mourning, and Prayer; and who knows if he will turn these evils from us? In which we humbly beg the assistance of all our Brethrens Prayers.